



October 6, 2015

Dear Community Leaders,

Great Lakes Rabbit Sanctuary, Inc. (GLRS), (Willis, MI), supports the following proposed legislation and pet store program. We would like Michigan community leaders to encourage humane pet acquisitions through shelters and foster-based animal rescue organizations.

1. The Large Scale Commercial Dog Breeder Act HB 4898 will help to curb puppy mills in the state.
2. The Humane Pet Acquisition Ordinance to prohibit the retail sale of dogs, cats, rabbits, ferrets, long-loved birds and large reptiles in local communities, which will protect families from irresponsible pet retailers.
3. The Puppy Friendly Pet Store program encourages pet supply stores to make an official policy not to sell puppies or kittens.

Currently, GLRS is home to over 60 rabbits and 10 potbelly pigs. Many pet stores sell rabbits without education about rabbits' needs, such as proper feeding, signs of illness, stress factors, all of which leads to their suffering and death. People buy pets for their children on impulse, especially at Easter. Children are not the best caretakers for rabbits and often lose interest, resulting in neglect or abandonment.

There are many little known facts about rabbits. They are considered exotic pets by veterinarians and not all vets will treat rabbits. Wire-bottomed cages used and sold in most pet stores ruin rabbits' feet, resulting in "sore hocks" that last a lifetime. Rabbits live 10 to 12 years on average and when not spayed or neutered their reproductive rates can grow exponentially. A rabbit can have a litter every 28 days.

GLRS receives dozens of calls and emails per week from people wishing to surrender their rabbits. Unfortunately, most rabbits who end up in shelters are euthanized because the shelters are not set up or trained to handle rabbits and are often overburdened by cats and dogs.

By preventing the retail sale of these animals we can start to reduce the number of unwanted animals needing rescue by our organization and others. Those people who truly understand the care these animals require may find their next best friend through rescue organizations and shelters.

Sincerely,
Tim Patino, President